

THE SEASON:

The Christmas season 2015 began before it began with my wife determined to have her sister and her family from Nevada whom we had not seen in many years share Christmas with us in Pennsylvania. It became increasingly obvious that they were not going to make it due to the timing and the cost restraints of flying a husband wife and two children to the east coast. The added stress of gift purchases and their decreased financial ability in a time when their real estate investments had become less of an asset and more of a liability made it next to impossible. This was the first year our only daughter had gone off to college in Florida and I was anticipating her return home for the first time given her new found collegiate independence. The parental/teenage relationship became increasingly strained in those months before freshman year, especially between my wife and daughter as independence seemed to want to burst out of its shell before its time like a baby bird eager to fly away before it has hatched. As all of this was happening my wife and her sisters 14 year old daughter had been discovering from a distance that they had so much in common and began to believe together that this was to be the best Christmas ever because no matter what the circumstances, somehow a family trip to Pennsylvania for the holidays was indeed going to happen. Like benign coconspirators, the young hopeful along with my wife researched fun and affordable winter Christmas activities in Pennsylvania behind the scenes. My Sister in laws two children from Nevada who had never seen snow had visions of a Pennsylvania winter wonderland. Miraculously a real estate transaction in the final hour afforded them the opportunity and it was a late night in December as my wife and I were falling asleep that we got the excited call from her niece that somehow my wife had expected all along. The 4 relatives from Nevada would be here just in time for Christmas. So the season was shaping up to be one like we had never seen.

As the meal and activity planning began to take shape, our daughter had told me of a sorority sister from California who's family was going through a vicious divorce and wanted to get away for Christmas break. "Dad can she stay with us for the Holiday" was the next question. My daughter proceeded to tell me that her friend had two moms and never knew her dad. He was a sperm donor that her mom had picked out. For years this friend had been away at prep school and now college and did not want to be in California during the break and the fighting. I discussed it with my wife and we added another guest. My daughter knowing her own family's conservative values and her friend's history began to prepare both parties. We understood our daughter's concerns and her friend said don't worry, "I know how to do parents". In addition to these added holiday arrivals, both of my handicapped parents who are also living with us made the holiday mix one to remember. Also, Add our thoughtful grown son who gifted my recently stroke surviving mom a tablet with software that could become her primary means of communication. That gift and its presentation brought even my retired Chicago police officer brother in law to tears.

After Christmas the gang decided to see a movie and because our visiting nephew had less than his share of influence over the list of activities such as baking and girl talk, we let him pick the movie. He is a bit older than his sister and has military aspirations, so he wanted to see Angelina Jolie's UNBROKEN, a movie of hope and redemption about a war hero and POW survivor. My wife and I are not in the habit of attending the theatre since our daughters Disney days have flown by, but of course we agreed. Here is where

the story turns. We knew the theme of the movie before we took our seats, but forgot that we too were captive as audience members subject to the trailers and program material presented in the media that surrounded us. As the sounds grew in volume and the pace of images around us accelerated, our young guests began to redirect their attention away from the smaller images on their smart phones. The big screen and romantic music lulled us into what seemed to be the beginning of an interesting love story. The actor was charming, handsome, wealthy, well dressed and very attentive to his leading lady. As engulfed as I was, I notice that my wife and the young ladies with us were drawn even deeper into the screen as if in a trance. The actor seemed to be all any girl could ever hope for as the leading lady's girl friends encouraged her on beyond her doubts and further into the relationship. Before any of us in our theatre seats had realized what was happening, we became voyeurs into the bedroom of a perverse bondage enthusiast and his courted female bound captive to his mental emotional and physical chains. We did not know we were about to experience the images sounds and allurements that many women across the country have read about in the book *50 shades of grey*, especially leading into our selected movie that documents the actual torturous entrapment of a POW held captive against his will. My wife and I looked at each other in unison and without words were able to share our thoughts that we would discuss later that night.

An age old philosophical question has been kicked around by scholars concerning art, society and influence. Today with media being our most prominent and pervasive form of art, we might now say; does media imitate culture or does culture imitate media? I was listening to a podcast earlier that week by Dr. Ravi Zacharias from his series Let My People Think and he was retelling the story (*Malcolm Muggeridge story*) of a medical Dr. who was asked to write about the feeling of a heart attack from a Dr's Perspective. Since this Dr. had just suffered a heart attack it seemed to be a welcomed perspective. He said that in his life he had experienced head aches and broken bones, but with each there was the perspective that he the observer was able to distance himself from the pain, but with a heart attack, since the heart is the source that pumps the blood through out the body, it was as if he was the pain unable to separate himself from it. He said he was inside the pain. This Says Ravi zacharis is how we as a culture are connected to media today. We are living it. We have moved from art imitating life through life imitating art and now to being inside of it. Media surrounds our lives. Today, we live **inside** the media culture.

Malcom Muggeridge told another true story of his visit over seas where he was witness to a public execution. He recalls a loud verbal command of Ready, Aim,.....

The entire process came to a halt when a cameraman yelled "cut, my battery died,"

The actual execution went into pause mode until the battery was replaced and the command began again, Ready, Aim, Fire. What a real world illustration of the heightened level of importance that we have allowed our media to take in our world today. We are indeed in it.

THE BIND

Just weeks After The inlaws, the friends, the Christmas decorations and my daughter were gone, the household began its return to our new norm of relative quite. I returned home one evening to find my wife huddled on the couch in a deep phone conversation with my daughter. The tone seemed to change with my arrival as I overheard my wife say “I have to tell your father” just before she and my daughter got off the phone. What I found out next had hit me with the weight of an entire culture collapsing around our family in a devastating instant. Our daughter was bound and gagged by an assistant coach at college before she escaped with her life. I ran into my office and booked a flight to her before I knew what I would do or say when I got there. I just knew I needed to get there. Traveling alone was a type of forced isolation with a window seat to my thoughts which flew between: Family, fatherhood, adolescence, childhood, movie trailers, work, reality and the future. I knew we were at a tipping point as a culture and now also as a family. Like a heart attack, we are now personally inside the pain. How did we descend into such a dark place and how do we move through this despair to a place of hope and restoration? These were the whirlwind of thoughts that carried me to my daughters campus.

Like a public education, I tried to keep my ideas in separate rooms of equal importance while I visited them, but I knew that despite that process that schooled me, this was an example of interrelatedness. I would spend the journey home trying to connect the dots.

Malcolm Muggeridge said. “The media today – press, television, and radio – are largely in the hands of those who favour the present Gaderene slide into decadence and Godlessness.”^[16]

How did we slide into decadence and Godlessness? How did what once was our subculture become our mainstream culture? And Who are the people controlling our media today?

As a husband, a father and an entrepreneur in the audio/video production business with an active curiosity and a family crisis to unpack, I began to research these questions with a special focus on what is today's most pervasive and all persuasive form of media. visual media, ie... film,t.v. video etc...

Historic research brought me back to several key and pivotal influences.

1. into the 1930s, the film industry would abide by the Hays Code, a secular system for controlling questionable material in movies that had been set up by a Presbyterian minister.
2. In 1934 a more stringent filter was placed on the film industry by the Archbishop John T. McNicholas. It was later called the National Legion of Decency. At that point, The Catholic church had gained a strong position in the direction and content of a movie
3. In 1952 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of allowing a Roberto Rossellini film to be viewed against the wishes of the National Legion of Decency. That began the loosening trend on morality in the movies.

4. In 1957, the Pope himself said Catholics should be more focused on seeing good films rather than boycotting bad ones.
5. By the 1960s, the liberal attitudes of America were even creeping into the membership of the Legion. Some condemned the priests who decided the ratings as too permissive, while others in the increasingly liberal Catholic population often felt the ratings were still too strict. As the cohesiveness of the church eroded, so did the effectiveness of the rating system and the pledge.

http://www.pajiba.com/think_pieces/how-the-catholic-church-controlled-hollywood.php

Below is the actual pledge taken from the book .

The Pledge of the Legion of Decency

+ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. I condemn all indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals. I promise to do all that I can to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest against them. I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to my moral life. I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.

- Beginning in 1938, the U.S. bishops requested that the Pledge of the Legion of Decency be taken by the faithful each year on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8.
- <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/news/2146228/posts>
- 6. In the autumn of 1966 another revision of the Production Code was unveiled which recommended that movies, "*. . . keep in closer harmony with the mores, the culture, the moral sense and the expectation of our society.*" The weekly news magazine *NEWSWEEK* called the new Code "*a glittering diadem of hypocrisy.*"

http://www.pictureshowman.com/articles_genhist_censorship.cfm

7. MARKETING EVIL

Another historical turning point in our culture worth discussing took place in February of 1988. over 170 leading activists from across the nation gathered in Virginia to discuss Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsens book that spelled out their comprehensive and detailed plan. It was a public relations strategy that planned on using the AIDS crisis to manipulate the public into viewing

homosexuals as victims. In their own words, this Harvard-educated student of Neuropsychology and this Harvard Doctorate of political science said of their plan,

"The campaign we outline in this book, though complex, depends centrally upon a program of unabashed propaganda, firmly grounded in long established principles of psychology and advertising."

Marketing expert Paul E. Rondeau explains their plan, to "force acceptance of homosexual culture into the mainstream, to silence opposition, and ultimately to convert American society.

Kirk and Madsen say "to one extent or another, the separability –and manipulability– of the verbal label is the basis for all the abstract principles underlying our proposed campaign."

So, they intend to launch a manipulative marketing campaign that intends to twist words and their meanings to influence our culture and remake it in their image.

They separate their plan into three stages. 1. Desensitization, 2. Jamming, and 3. conversion.